

Diane Interviews Elmer

Elmer Carlson was born in 1911 and lived in Minneapolis, Minnesota during his teen years. Elmer believes that growing up in the 1920's is much different than growing up in the 1990's.

Q. Who did you vote for?

A. Well, I always voted Democratic.

Q. What issues do you remember?

A. I remember the Great Depression, when the Stock Market crashed in 1929 my father's business went bankrupt and so he and I went to work laying cement.

Q. What did you do for entertainment?

A. I loved to read. I would spend time at the library or playing baseball with my friends.

Q. When did you get your first T.V.?

A. In 1950 we got our first television. We liked to watch the McCarthy Papers which was about Russian Organizations.

Q. What kind of car, if any, did you drive?

A. It was my parents' car -- a Chevrolet that had no rear window. I was the only one of my friends that had a car to drive.

Q. What else was different from today?

A. Well, there were the ice men and coffee men who would go down the street selling their products. I can remember before we had electric lights we had to use gas lights and a gas man would go down the street to light the street lights. Instead of buses like we have today, there were street cars, also the doctor would come to your home and if you had a disease like measles or mumps or scarlet fever, your house was quarantined. This meant that only the father could leave to go to work and nobody was allowed inside your house.

Q. Did you ever break the law?

A. During the prohibition we would go to places called "Speak Easies" where they would sell us beer.

Q. Did your school have dances?

A. Yes, but they were always right after school and nobody danced because they were too scared to ask anyone. The

dances back then like the Charleston took two people.

Q. What was your Big dream?

A. I wanted to get through college. When the depression started I had to drop out of college to get a job. I got a real good paying job surveying and then they found out that I didn't have a college degree and so they lowered my pay tremendously. I had to wait three years before I went back to college.